

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the listing of claims below.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ for a mechanical and electrically conductive connection, comprising: having
_____ an electrical conductor ~~(12, 13)~~, which has a cutout in its outer contour in which at least one spreading element ~~(14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, 44, 45)~~ of the connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ can be inserted and can be actuated by means of an operating element arranged within the outer contour of the connecting element in order to brace it in the cutout, wherein
~~characterized in that~~
the operating element ~~(18, 26, 47, 48, 56, 57)~~ has a hinged and a movable plate ~~(58a, 58b)~~, between which wedges ~~(59a, 59b)~~ can be inserted which drive the plates away from one another.

2. (Currently Amended) The connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein
the at least one spreading element ~~(14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, 44, 45)~~ can be braced by means of a bracing movement which is directed parallel to ~~the~~ a direction of its insertion in the cutout.

3. (Currently Amended) The connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ as claimed in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein
the at least one spreading element ~~(14, 15, 16, 17, 23, 24, 44, 45)~~ can be braced by means of a bracing movement which is directed perpendicular to ~~the~~ a direction of its insertion in the cutout.

4. (Currently Amended) The connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ as claimed in ~~one of~~
~~claims 1 to 3,~~
~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein
the bracing of the at least one spreading element ~~(23, 24, 44, 45)~~ can be brought about by faces

which can be moved relative to one another and are arranged in relation to one another in the form of a wedge in cross section.

5. (Currently Amended) The connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ as claimed in claim 4, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the faces are conical faces ~~(23, 24, 44, 45)~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 5,~~ ~~characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ has at least one first and at least one second spreading element ~~(22, 23)~~, which each have an associated first and second electrical conductor ~~(13, 14)~~.

7. (Currently Amended) The connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 6,~~ ~~characterized in that claim 1, further comprising~~ a mounting apparatus for the electrical conductor ~~(12, 13)~~ is arranged on the connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The connecting element ~~(11, 21, 41, 51)~~ as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 7,~~ ~~characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the electrical conductor ~~(12, 13)~~ is ~~the~~ an inner conductor of a compressed gas-insulated tubular conductor.

9. (Currently Amended) A conductor arrangement having ~~the~~ a connecting element for a mechanical and electrically conductive connection, comprising:
an electrical conductor, which has a cutout in its outer contour in which at least one spreading element of the connecting element can be inserted and can be actuated by means of an

operating element arranged within the outer contour of the connecting element in order to brace it in the cutout, wherein

the operating element has a hinged and a movable plate, between which wedges can be inserted which drive the plates away from one another; and~~(11, 21, 41, 51) as claimed in one of claims 1 to 8~~
and having

- _____ an electrical conductor~~(12, 13), wherein~~

~~characterized in that~~the electrical conductor is an elongate electrical conductor~~(12, 13)~~, and the cutout is arranged on one of its end faces.

10. (Currently Amended) A conductor arrangement having the connecting element for a mechanical and electrically conductive connection, comprising:

_____ an electrical conductor, which has a cutout in its outer contour in which at least one spreading element of the connecting element can be inserted and can be actuated by means of an operating element arranged within the outer contour of the connecting element in order to brace it in the cutout, wherein

the operating element has a hinged and a movable plate, between which wedges can be inserted which drive the plates away from one another; and~~(11, 21, 41, 51) as claimed in one of claims 1 to 8~~ and having

_____ an electrical conductor,

~~characterized in that~~wherein

the electrical conductor~~(12, 13)~~ is a tube.